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COMMITTEE ON THE PEACEFUL
USES OF OUTER SPACE
Forty-first session
3-12 June 1998

PROVISIONAL AGENDA FOR THE FORTY-FIRST SESSION

**To be convened at the United Nations Office at Vienna,
on Wednesday, 3 June 1998, at 3 p.m.**

1. Adoption of the agenda.
2. Statement by the Chairman.
3. General exchange of views.
4. Ways and means of maintaining outer space for peaceful purposes.*
5. Preparations for the Third United Nations Conference on the Exploration and Peaceful Uses of Outer Space (UNISPACE III) by the Preparatory Committee for UNISPACE III.
6. Report of the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee on the work of its thirty-fifth session (A/AC.105/697 and Corr.1).
7. Report of the Legal Subcommittee on the work of its thirty-seventh session (A/AC.105/698).
8. Spin-off benefits of space technology: review of current status.
9. Other matters.
10. Report of the Committee to the General Assembly.

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*Priority item in accordance with General Assembly resolution 52/56, paragraph 32.

V.98-52620 (E)

ANNOTATIONS*

Item 1: Adoption of the agenda

Item 2: Statement by the Chairman

1. Following the adoption of the agenda by the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space and the organization of work, the Chairman will make a statement reviewing developments of relevance to the work of the Committee that have taken place since its fortieth session. The indicative schedule of work, which will be followed with flexibility, is contained in the annex to the present document.

Item 3: General exchange of views

2. The Committee will begin its substantive work with a general exchange of views.

Item 4: Ways and means of maintaining outer space for peaceful purposes

3. The General Assembly, in its resolution 52/56, paragraph 32, requested the Committee to continue to consider, as a matter of priority, ways and means of maintaining outer space for peaceful purposes, taking into account the views expressed at its fortieth session and at the fifty-second session of the General Assembly, and to report thereon to the Assembly at its fifty-third session.

Item 5: Preparations for the Third United Nations Conference on the Exploration and Peaceful Uses of Outer Space (UNISPACE III) by the Preparatory Committee for UNISPACE III

4. The General Assembly, in its resolution 52/56, paragraph 23, agreed that the Third United Nations Conference on the Exploration and Peaceful Uses of Outer Space (UNISPACE III) shall be convened at the United Nations Office at Vienna from 19 to 30 July 1999 as a special session of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space, open to all States Members of the United Nations. In paragraph 24 of the same resolution, the Assembly endorsed the recommendations of the Preparatory Committee at its 1997 session, as contained in its report,[1] and requested the Preparatory and Advisory Committees and the executive secretariat to carry out their tasks in accordance with those recommendations and to report to the General Assembly at its fifty-third session. In paragraph 17 of the same resolution, the Assembly also agreed that the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee should reconvene the Working Group of the Whole to assist the Advisory Committee in its preparatory work for UNISPACE III.

5. Pursuant to the agreement expressed and the request made by the General Assembly in the above-mentioned paragraphs of its resolution 52/56, the Advisory Committee requested the Working Group of the Whole to give full consideration to the tasks entrusted to it by the Assembly and to report thereon to the Advisory Committee (A/AC.105/697 and Corr.1, paras. 52-54).

6. The Working Group of the Whole had before it a document (A/AC.105/C.1/L.218) containing elements to be considered for inclusion in the full draft report of UNISPACE III. The document had been prepared by the Secretariat in response to the request by the Preparatory Committee at its 1997 session. On the basis of the comments provided by the Working Group, the Secretariat will prepare and circulate a first full draft report for paragraph-by-paragraph consideration by the Preparatory Committee at its 1998 session (A/AC.105/697 and Corr.1, annex II, paras. 15-16).

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*The annotations and the indicative schedule of work are not part of the agenda to be adopted by the Committee.

7. The Working Group of the Whole also had before it a report of the Secretariat on organizational matters relating to the holding of UNISPACE III (A/AC.105/685 and Corr.1), containing the information requested by the Preparatory Committee at its 1997 session.

8. On the basis of its deliberations, the Working Group of the Whole made recommendations concerning the preparation of the draft report of UNISPACE III and the organization of UNISPACE III, including the establishment of main committees and the composition of the bureau, consideration of agenda items, participation of international organizations and industry, rules of procedure, space exhibition, public evening lectures and regional preparatory meetings. Those recommendations are reflected in its report (A/AC.105/697 and Corr.1, annex II, paras. 13-43). In accordance with the recommendations by the Working Group, the Secretariat will provide the Preparatory Committee, at its 1998 session, with an updated list of workshops to be organized by interested organizations, a list of organizations and space-related industries to be invited to UNISPACE III, draft provisional rules of procedure and cost estimates for interpretation services for the public evening lectures.

9. The Advisory Committee adopted the report of the Working Group of the Whole on the preparations for UNISPACE III (A/AC.105/697 and Corr.1, annex II, paras. 13-43) and noted that the report of the Working Group of the Whole provided the basis for the Preparatory Committee to carry out the task entrusted to it by the General Assembly (A/AC.105/697 and Corr.1, para. 55).

10. The Legal Subcommittee, during its thirty-seventh session, in 1998, considered the proposal by Argentina that UNISPACE III should consider legal aspects of space activities as an important part of its work and that the Legal Subcommittee should make a contribution to the work of UNISPACE III in its consideration of legal issues (A/AC.105/698, para. 74). Discussions in the Legal Subcommittee on the matter are reflected in its report (A/AC.105/698, paras. 73-77).

11. The Legal Subcommittee recommended that its Chairman should report to UNISPACE III on the work of the Subcommittee, including its past achievements, current work and new challenges in the development of space law (A/AC.105/698, para. 77).

Item 6: Report of the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee on the work of its thirty-fifth session (A/AC.105/697 and Corr.1)

12. At its thirty-fifth session, the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee, in accordance with General Assembly resolution 52/56, paragraph 15, considered items (a) through (j) below.

(a) United Nations Programme on Space Applications and the coordination of space activities within the United Nations system

13. The Subcommittee continued its consideration of this item on a priority basis (A/AC.105/697 and Corr.1, paras. 20-51). The report of the Subcommittee contains a review of the United Nations Programme on Space Applications and its activities for 1997 and 1998 and a proposed programme of activities for 1999, which it recommended for approval (A/AC.105/697 and Corr.1, paras. 21-32).

14. The Subcommittee continued to stress the necessity of ensuring the coordination of outer space activities within the United Nations system. It noted that the next session of the Inter-Agency Meeting on Outer Space Activities was scheduled to be held at the United Nations Office at Vienna from 2 to 3 June 1998 (A/AC.105/697 and Corr.1, para. 38). The report of the Inter-Agency Meeting will be made available to the Committee during its current session.

15. On the question of regional and interregional mechanisms of cooperation, the Subcommittee noted the efforts undertaken as part of the United Nations Programme on Space Applications, in response to General Assembly resolutions 45/72 and 50/27, to establish, on the basis of affiliation to the United Nations, regional centres for space science and technology education in existing national or regional educational institutions in developing countries, as outlined in the report of the Expert on Space Applications (A/AC.105/693) and as reported during the thirty-fifth session of the Subcommittee by Member States concerned (A/AC.105/697 and Corr.1, paras. 42-47).

(b) Matters relating to remote sensing of the Earth by satellite, including,* inter alia, *applications for developing countries

16. The Subcommittee continued its consideration of this item on a priority basis. The views expressed on the item at its thirty-fifth session are reflected in its report (A/AC.105/697 and Corr.1, paras. 58-66).

(c) Use of nuclear power sources in outer space

17. The Subcommittee continued its consideration of this item on a priority basis. The Subcommittee noted that the Committee, at its fortieth session, had recalled its agreement that the Principles Relevant to the Use of Nuclear Power Sources in Outer Space, which had been adopted by the General Assembly by its resolution 47/68, should remain in their current form until amended and that, before amendment, proper consideration should be given to the aims and objectives of any proposed revision.[2] The Subcommittee agreed that, at the present time, revision of the Principles was not warranted and that, until a firm scientific and technical consensus had been reached on the revision of the Principles, it would be inappropriate to pass on the topic to the Legal Subcommittee (A/AC.105/697 and Corr.1, para. 69).

18. The Subcommittee agreed to reconvene its Working Group on the Use of Nuclear Power Sources in Outer Space. The report of the Working Group was endorsed by the Subcommittee (A/AC.105/697 and Corr.1, paras. 74-75 and annex III). The Subcommittee took note of the working papers submitted by the Russian Federation on collisions of nuclear power sources with space debris (A/AC.105/C.1/L.220) and on the use of nuclear power sources in outer space (A/AC.105/C.1/L.223). The Subcommittee also took note of a working paper submitted jointly by the Russian Federation, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and the United States of America on a four-year work plan for developing a framework for safety assurance processes and standards for nuclear power sources in outer space (A/AC.105/C.1/L.222) and agreed that a suitable approach to its consideration of this agenda item was contained in that working paper. The Subcommittee further noted the information submitted by member States and international organizations in response to General Assembly resolution 52/56, paragraphs 18 and 29 (A/AC.105/680 and Add.1). The views expressed are reflected in the report of the Subcommittee (A/AC.105/697 and Corr.1, paras. 68-81).

19. The Subcommittee recommended that further consideration of the item be postponed until the year 2000 in view of its abbreviated schedule of work at its thirty-sixth session, in 1999, and the preparatory work to be carried out for UNISPACE III (A/AC.105/697 and Corr.1, para. 81).

(d) Space debris

20. In accordance with General Assembly resolution 52/56, the Subcommittee continued its consideration of this item on a priority basis.

21. The Subcommittee noted with appreciation the report by the Secretariat prepared in response to its request to compile on an annual basis the information on various steps taken by space agencies for reducing the growth or damage potential of space debris (A/AC.105/681). The Subcommittee also took note of the working papers

on space debris submitted by the International Academy of Astronautics (IAA) (A/AC.105/C.1/L.217) and by the Russian Federation (A/AC.105/C.1/L.219) as well as the information submitted by member States and international organizations in response to General Assembly resolution 52/56, referred to in paragraph 18 above. The Subcommittee noted with satisfaction that, following its invitation, the Inter-Agency Space Debris Coordination Committee (IADC) had made a technical presentation on space debris mitigation and agreed that IADC should be invited to make a presentation on its work at the thirty-sixth session of the Subcommittee (A/AC.105/697 and Corr.1, para. 91). The views expressed are reflected in the report of the Subcommittee (A/AC.105/697 and Corr.1, paras. 83-106).

22. In accordance with the multi-year plan for the consideration of specific topics related to space debris, which it had adopted at its thirty-second session and had agreed to implement with flexibility, the Subcommittee at its thirty-fifth session, in 1998, focused its attention on space debris mitigation measures. The technical report of the Subcommittee for 1998 is contained in the report of the Subcommittee (A/AC.105/697 and Corr.1, para. 99). The Subcommittee took note of the first two parts of the technical report, as amended at its thirty-fifth session (A/AC.105/C.1/L.224). Those two parts had been originally prepared by the Subcommittee at its 1996 and 1997 sessions, concerning, respectively, the measurements of space debris and the modelling of the space debris environment and risk assessment. The Subcommittee agreed that the final technical report of the Subcommittee on space debris should be adopted at its thirty-sixth session, in 1999, after final editing during the inter-sessional period and consideration by relevant organizations, such as IADC and IAA (A/AC.105/697 and Corr.1, para. 95).

(e) Questions relating to space transportation systems and their implications for future activities in space

(f) Examination of the physical nature and technical attributes of the geostationary orbit; examination of its utilization and applications, including,* inter alia, *in the field of space communications, as well as other questions relating to space communications developments, taking particular account of the needs and interests of developing countries

(g) Progress in national and international space activities related to the Earth environment, in particular progress in the International Geosphere-Biosphere (Global Change) Programme

(h) Matters relating to life sciences, including space medicine

(i) Matters relating to planetary exploration and matters relating to astronomy

23. The Subcommittee continued its consideration of the above items; its views are reflected in its report (A/AC.105/697 and Corr.1, paras. 108-112, 114-122, 124-129, 131-135 and 137-143). It recommended that further consideration of the above items be postponed until the year 2000 in view of its abbreviated schedule of work at its thirty-sixth session in 1999, and the preparatory work to be carried out for UNISPACE III (A/AC.105/697 and Corr.1, paras. 112, 122, 129, 135 and 143).

24. During its consideration of item (f) above, the Subcommittee took note of a working paper on the subject submitted by the Czech Republic at its thirty-fifth session (A/AC.105/C.1/L.216).

(j) The theme fixed for special attention at the 1998 session of the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee: scientific and technical aspects and applications of space-based meteorology

25. The Subcommittee at its thirty-fifth session paid special attention to the theme "Scientific and technical aspects and applications of space-based meteorology". It noted with satisfaction that, at its invitation, the

Committee on Space Research (COSPAR) and the International Astronautical Federation (IAF) had organized a symposium on the theme on 9 and 10 February 1998 (A/AC.105/697 and Corr.1, para. 144).

26. The Subcommittee recommended that further consideration of the item be postponed until the year 2000 in view of its abbreviated schedule of work at its thirty-sixth session, in 1999, and the preparatory work to be carried out for UNISPACE III (A/AC.105/697 and Corr.1, para. 148).

27. The Subcommittee agreed that it should identify, at its thirty-sixth session, the theme to be the focus of special attention at its thirty-seventh session. The Subcommittee recommended that COSPAR and IAF, in liaison with Member States, should be invited to arrange a symposium, with as wide a participation as possible, during the first week of its thirty-seventh session, in order to complement discussions by the Subcommittee on the special theme (A/AC.105/697 and Corr.1, para. 155).

(k) Implementation of the recommendations of the Second United Nations Conference on the Exploration and Peaceful Uses of Outer Space (UNISPACE 82)

28. In accordance with General Assembly resolution 52/56, paragraph 17, the Subcommittee reconvened, at its thirty-fifth session, the Working Group of the Whole to conclude its evaluation of the implementation of the recommendations of the Second United Nations Conference on the Exploration and Peaceful Uses of Outer Space (UNISPACE 82). The Subcommittee adopted the report of the Working Group of the Whole, which contained conclusions based on its evaluation of the matter (A/AC.105/697 and Corr.1, annex II, paras. 3-12).

Item 7: Report of the Legal Subcommittee on the work of its thirty-seventh session (A/AC.105/698)

29. At its thirty-seventh session, the Legal Subcommittee, in accordance with General Assembly resolution 52/56, paragraph 4, considered items 3, 4, 5 and 6 of its agenda, the deliberations of which are summarized in subsections (a), (b), (c) and (d) below.

(a) Question of review and possible revision of the Principles Relevant to the Use of Nuclear Power Sources in Outer Space

30. Having noted the results of the work of the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee on the subject of nuclear power sources in outer space (see paragraphs 17-19 above), the Legal Subcommittee decided not to re-establish its Working Group on agenda item 3. The Legal Subcommittee agreed that, at the present time, revision of the Principles was not warranted. Having also noted the recommendation of the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee to suspend its consideration of the item on the use of nuclear power sources in outer space for one year (see paragraph 19 above), the Legal Subcommittee agreed that, at its thirty-eighth and thirty-ninth sessions, consideration by the Working Group of the item should again be suspended, pending the results of the work in the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee at its thirty-seventh session, in the year 2000 (A/AC.105/698, paras. 22-26).

(b) Matters relating to the definition and delimitation of outer space and to the character and utilization of the geostationary orbit, including consideration of ways and means to ensure the rational and equitable use of the geostationary orbit without prejudice to the role of the International Telecommunication Union

31. The Legal Subcommittee, through its Working Group on agenda item 4, continued its consideration of that item.

32. With regard to the definition and delimitation of outer space, the Subcommittee had before it the replies from Member States to the questionnaire on possible legal issues with regard to aerospace objects (A/AC.105/635 and Add.1-5) and a note by the Secretariat containing the results of the comprehensive analysis of those replies (A/AC.105/C.2/L.204), which had been before the Subcommittee at its thirty-sixth session.

33. As for the discussion on the character and utilization of the geostationary orbit, the Subcommittee had before it a working paper entitled "Some considerations concerning the utilization of the geostationary satellite orbit" (A/AC.105/C.2/L.200 and Corr.1), submitted by Colombia to the Subcommittee at its thirty-fifth session, and a working paper prepared by the Secretariat in cooperation with the secretariat of the International Telecommunication Union (ITU) and submitted to the Subcommittee at its thirty-sixth session (A/AC.105/C.2/L.205), which was an analysis of the compatibility of the approach contained in that working paper submitted by Colombia with the existing rules and procedures of ITU relating to the use of the geostationary orbit. The Subcommittee also had before it a conference room paper containing a compendium of relevant sections and/or documents referred to in the working paper by Colombia (A/AC.105/C.2/1997/CRP.3/Rev.1), which had been also before the Subcommittee at its thirty-sixth session. In the discussion that took place in the Legal Subcommittee at its thirty-seventh session, reference was made to the working paper submitted by the Czech Republic to the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee at its thirty-fifth session (A/AC.105/C.1/L.216).

34. The Legal Subcommittee took note of the report of the Working Group on agenda item 4 (A/AC.105/698, para. 45, and annex I). The views expressed in the Subcommittee are reflected in the report of the Subcommittee (A/AC.105/698, paras. 32-42).

(c) Review of the status of the five international legal instruments governing outer space

35. The Subcommittee had before it a note by the Secretariat on the review of the status of the five international legal instruments governing outer space (A/AC.105/C.2/L.210). The Subcommittee also had before it a working paper on the same subject submitted by Germany on behalf of the States members of the European Space Agency (ESA) and States having signed cooperation agreements with ESA (A/AC.105/C.2/L.211) and noted that sections I and II of that working paper should be considered under agenda item 5, while section III should be considered under agenda item 6 (A/AC.105/698, para. 60; see also paragraph 39 below). The Russian Federation also submitted a working paper on the same subject (A/AC.105/C.2/L.213), which is set out in annex II of the report of the Subcommittee (A/AC.105/698).

36. The Subcommittee agreed that the Secretariat should be requested to prepare, within existing resources, a list of international agreements and other available legal documents relevant to space-related activities, indicating where they might be found, as a working document for member States. The list should also incorporate international agreements and legal documents relating to environmental law that might be relevant to space-related activities (A/AC.105/698, para. 59).

37. The Subcommittee noted that, pursuant to a recommendation made during the fortieth session of the Committee,[3] a working group would be established to consider agenda item 5 during the thirty-eighth session of the Subcommittee, in 1999 (A/AC.105/698, para. 61).

(d) New items for the agenda of the Subcommittee

38. In accordance with the recommendation of the Committee at its fortieth session,[4] the Subcommittee continued its informal consultations with a view to coming up with a list of annotated items agreed upon by consensus that could be considered by the Committee at its forty-first session for possible inclusion in the

agenda of the Subcommittee. The discussions on the matter are reflected in the report of the Subcommittee on its thirty-seventh session (A/AC.105/698, paras. 66-72).

39. During the thirty-seventh session of the Subcommittee, Germany, on behalf of the co-sponsors, introduced its revised working paper (A/AC.105/C.2/L.211/Rev.1), which is set out in annex II of the report of the Subcommittee (A/AC.105/698). Section III of that working paper outlined a proposed new agenda item. The Subcommittee agreed that the discussion on the proposal contained in section III of that revised working paper should be continued in the Committee at its current session with a view to possibly reaching consensus on including the proposed item as a new item on the agenda of the Legal Subcommittee (A/AC.105/698, para. 72).

Item 8: Spin-off benefits of space technology: review of current status

40. The General Assembly, in resolution 52/56, paragraph 33, requested the Committee to continue to consider at its forty-first session its agenda item entitled "Spin-off benefits of space technology: review of current status".

Item 9: Other matters

(a) Schedule of work of the Committee and its subsidiary bodies for 1999

41. At its thirty-fourth session, in 1997, the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee recommended that the duration of the meetings of the Committee and its subsidiary bodies in 1999 should not exceed a total of 16 days and that an indicative schedule of meetings for 1999 would be: eight days for the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee and five days for the Legal Subcommittee, to be scheduled successively during February/ March 1999; and no more than three days for the Committee, to be scheduled immediately prior to UNISPACE III, unless it was considered more appropriate to hold it earlier. That recommendation was made on the understanding that the exact schedule would be confirmed by the Committee in 1998, depending on the progress made in the preparations for UNISPACE III and the agreement to be reached at the 1998 session of the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee as to which of its agenda items should be considered at its 1999 session (A/AC.105/672, para. 160). In endorsing that recommendation, the Committee, at its fortieth session, in 1997, agreed that it had been made on an exceptional basis for the year 1999, so that the savings resulting from the shortening of the sessions could be utilized for UNISPACE III.

42. The Scientific and Technical Subcommittee, at its thirty-fifth session, recommended that the agenda for its thirty-sixth session, in 1999, should include the following priority items: (a) preparations for the Third United Nations Conference on the Exploration and Peaceful Uses of Outer Space (UNISPACE III), by the Advisory Committee for UNISPACE III; (b) space debris; and (c) consideration of the United Nations Programme on Space Applications and the coordination of space activities within the United Nations system (A/AC.105/697 and Corr.1, para. 152). The Subcommittee recommended that further consideration of the items listed in paragraph 153 of its report should be suspended for one year, to be resumed at its thirty-seventh session, in the year 2000 (A/AC.105/697 and Corr.1, para. 153).

43. The Legal Subcommittee, at its thirty-seventh session, agreed that, in view of its shortened thirty-eighth session, in 1999, in accordance with the preparations for UNISPACE III, the work of the Working Group on agenda item 3 would be suspended for that session and that the items of the agenda should be considered in the following order: items 3, 5, 4 and 6 (A/AC.105/698, para. 15).

(b) Records of the Committee and its Legal Subcommittee

44. The General Assembly, in its resolution 52/56, paragraph 9, noted with satisfaction that the Legal Subcommittee had been provided, at its thirty-sixth session, with unedited verbatim transcripts of the

proceedings in lieu of summary records. The Assembly also noted that the Committee had evaluated the use of unedited verbatim transcripts at its fortieth session and agreed to continue the use of those transcripts in lieu of verbatim records and to review further its requirements for those transcripts at its forty-first session, in 1998.

45. The unedited verbatim transcripts of the fortieth session of the Committee are contained in documents COPUOS/T.433-442 and those of the thirty-sixth session of the Legal Subcommittee are contained in documents COPUOS/Legal/T.598-604. Documents containing unedited verbatim transcripts at its thirty-seventh session of the Legal Subcommittee (COPUOS/Legal/T.605-612) will be made available in due course.

(c) Other reports

46. The Committee will have before it the report on the scientific and technical presentations to the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee at its thirty-fifth session, including those presentations made as part of the symposium referred to in paragraph 25 above (A/AC.105/699). Additional reports may be submitted to the Committee as they become available.

47. The Committee may wish to discuss other matters as appropriate.

Notes

[1]*Official Records of the General Assembly, Fifty-second Session, Supplement No. 20 (A/52/20), sect. II.E.*

[2]Ibid., para. 78.

[3]Ibid., para. 132.

[4]Ibid., para. 173 (d).

Annex

INDICATIVE SCHEDULE OF WORK

Date	*Morning*		*Afternoon*	
Wednesday, 3 June			Item 1 Item 2 Item 3	Adoption of the agenda Statement by the Chairman General exchange of views
Thursday, 4 June	Item 3	(continued)	Item 3 Item 4 Item 5	(continued) Ways and means of maintaining outer space for peaceful purposes Preparations for UNISPACE III by the Preparatory Committee
Friday, 5 June	Item 5 Item 6	(continued) Report of the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee	Item 5 Item 6	(continued) (continued)
Monday, 8 June	Item 5 Item 6	(continued) (continued)	Item 5 Item 6	(continued) (continued)
Tuesday, 9 June	Item 7	Report of the Legal Subcommittee	Item 5 Item 6	(continued) (continued)
Wednesday, 10 June	Item 7	(continued)	Item 7	(continued)
Thursday, 11 June	Item 8	Spin-off benefits of space technology	Item 9	Other matters
Friday, 12 June	Item 10	Report of the Committee to the General Assembly	Item 10	(continued)